

# WONKFEST

| WEDNESDAY 9 JUNE |  | THURSDAY 10 JUNE   |   |  |
|------------------|--|--|---|--|
| 09.00 -10.30     | <b>Building universities back better</b><br>It's been more than a year of loss, challenge, and frustration - but there's been camaraderie, learning, and success against the odds, too. A renewed attention to staff and student wellbeing, rapid digital transformation, and effective leadership, governance and student voice, are all in the mix as universities plan for what comes next.<br><br>Simone Buitendijk, Vice Chancellor, University of Leeds<br>Monisha Shah, Chair, Rose Bruford College<br>Hillary Gyebi-Ababio, Vice President (Higher Education), NUS<br>Debbie McVitty, Editor, Wonkhe   |  | <b>Universities building a post-pandemic political and civil society</b><br>Research - largely done inside universities - might have helped find a way out of the pandemic with vaccines, treatments and logistical and technological solutions, but at the same time, the sector's critics on the national stage only ever seem to get louder. Meanwhile, the positive impact of higher education is felt everywhere - from town halls to high streets and the work goes on beneath the surface to keep universities relevant, and ready for the challenges ahead. But it won't be easy, and will definitely require real leadership and creativity, and a refreshed sense of collaboration.<br><br>Julia Unwin, Non-Executive, Speaker, Consultant and Mentor<br>Rachel Wolf, Founding Partner, Public First<br>Hetan Shah, Chief Executive, British Academy<br>Mark Leach, Editor in Chief, Wonkhe   |  |
|                  | 11.00-12.00  | <b>Bridging the digital divide</b><br>Technology has the potential to be a great leveller and engine of opportunity, but too often it merely reproduces existing patterns of disadvantage. During Covid-19 the scale of the digital divide became clear, with many students (and some staff, too) reporting limitations in access to technology, space, and connectivity. As on- and offline learning and student life become increasingly blended, how can universities bridge the digital divide?<br><i>Sponsored by Handshake</i><br><br>Clare Adams, Head of University Success, UK, Handshake<br>Debbie Holley, Professor of Learning Innovation: Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, Bournemouth University<br>Becky Thomson, Students' Union President, Christ Church SU<br>Debbie McVitty, Editor, Wonkhe | <b>Care in the university community</b><br>Read the runes on social media, and you'll notice that this is a generation of students that doesn't feel noticed, served or cared about. It's interesting because so much of the contemporary contested policy environment concerns "care" and universities' duty of it towards students and staff. But as the line between the duties of the state and the sector blurs, what does it mean to care for students and staff appropriately and effectively? How much responsibility should we place on members of our communities to care for themselves? And where participation means harm, how much of that are universities contributing to, how much can universities really control, and how much is merely the chaos of a pandemic?<br><i>Sponsored by Unite</i><br><br>Kate Tapper, Leadership Coach, Bud Development<br>Janice Kay, Provost, University of Exeter<br>Franziska Schwarz, Safeguarding Policy Manager, Bond<br>Leah Richmond, Event Management undergraduate, Leeds Beckett University and Social Media Coordinator, This Is Us At Uni<br>Ruqaiyah Javid, Vice President Education, City Students' Union | <b>Places and place-based partnerships</b><br>Despite a national policy agenda in England that has recently pitted the further and higher education sectors against each other in a battle for resources, so much collaboration between HE and FE has been going on behind the scenes. Local and national skills agendas can align, but leaders from across colleges and universities need to put aside historical challenges and policy agendas that pull in other directions and work to bring it all together for their students and communities. It takes real leadership and imagination - so who will answer the call?<br><i>Sponsored by Shakespeare Martineau</i><br><br>Dave Phoenix, Vice Chancellor of London South Bank University and CEO of LSBU Group<br>Ewart Keep, Professor (Emeritus), Department of Education, Oxford University<br>Amanda Melton, Principal and Chief Executive, Nelson and Colne College<br>Smita Jamdar, Partner & Head of Education at Shakespeare Martineau |
| 12.00-12.30      | <b>Wonk Corner: What your SOCs say about how good your job is</b><br>In policy around the UK we appear to be settling on the idea that a graduate in a "good job" is both an appropriate end goal for higher education study and a measure of the quality of provision. The idea of a "good job" is a complex one, and this session will focus on current and planned attempts to see "good jobs" in sector data. We'll dive into LEO and Graduate Outcomes, look at the distinction between "highly skilled jobs", well-paid jobs, and "graduate" jobs, and peer at the other variables that may have an impact. With output measures in the ascendent, it's been argued this problem of definition is the biggest challenge currently facing the sector.<br><br>David Kernohan, Associate Editor, Wonkhe |  | <b>Wonk Corner: Policy, politics and the ever-thorny issue of tuition fees</b><br>A spending review is looming, as is a Westminster government response to the Augar review. Could it bring the long-mooted cut in the headline fee level, top-up fees or something else bigger and more threatening to universities' ability to thrive and survive? Join Mark Leach to chat fees and funding, Westminster politics, the personalities that are influencing the direction of travel, and read the runes to see where we're going to end up.<br><br>Jonathan Simons, Director and Head of the Education Practice, Public First<br>Mark Leach, Editor in Chief, Wonkhe  |  |

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| 12.30-13.30      | <p><b>It ain't what you do it's the way that you flex it</b></p> <p>We're told the post-Covid world will be more flexible, whether that's in the shape of the education offer, in provision of learning and teaching, or in professional working cultures. But really, everyone wants a version of flexibility that works for their particular circumstances. Which bits of university activity are ripe for flexing, what should remain rigid - and who should get to decide?<br/><i>Sponsored by Aula</i></p> <p>Osama Khan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education, University of Surrey<br/>Philippa Hardman, VP of Learning, Aula<br/>Joe Cooper, Deputy Director, HR and Service Transformation, Imperial College Londo<br/>Debbie McVitty, Editor, Wonkhe</p>  | <p><b>The university of the high street</b></p> <p>Building back higher starts with buildings. And infrastructure. Changing modes of delivery, and new civic roles for universities, will require campuses of a different shape and capacities will have to shift to meet new priorities. University leaders are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their provision - in the year of COP26 it seems clearer than ever that what providers do matters for the planet, not just the campus and those who use it. And a struggling high street has seen universities step in as anchors to sustain once-vibrant cities - there's a lot involved in turning a heritage building into a learning space.</p> <p>Steven Spier, Vice Chancellor, Kingston University<br/>Roger Forsdyke, Managing Director at Willmott Dixon<br/>Keri Facer, Professor of Educational and Social Futures, University of Bristol<br/>David Kernohan, Associate Editor, Wonkhe</p>                                | <p><b>What data can tell universities about life after Covid</b></p> <p>Over the next decade, demand for university was set to rise. The pandemic seems to have altered some trends, but left others intact. Where does this leave universities? Join dataHE uberwork Mark Corver to explore what data can tell us about how student demand, university decisions, and policy choices might shape the sector's future.<br/><i>Sponsored by dataHE</i></p> <p>Mark Corver, Co-Founder, dataHE<br/>David Kernohan, Associate Editor, Wonkhe</p>  | <p><b>Changing the culture of changing the culture</b></p> <p>Higher education is traditionally seen (and experienced) as being slow and resistant to change, but over the past year there's been renewed interest in how large organisations can change to adapt to new requirements and agendas. Covid caused a rapid online pivot, but our future theory of change can't be introducing a new deadly pathogen into the environment if we want higher education to remain "agile" and "relevant" - and even that's a big if. So outside of running some projects and disseminating a best practice guide, how can higher education policymakers, leaders and influencers change the way we do change without the drama and pain of global pandemic as the impetus?</p> <p>Rachel Whale, CEO, Koreo<br/>Mark Watson, Founder and CEO Purpleworks International<br/>Charlotte Summers, Royal Society of the Arts<br/>Jim Dickinson, Associate Editor, Wonkhe</p> |
| 13.30-14.00      | <p><b>Wonk Corner: Registrarism Live</b></p> <p>Registrarism Live is back, in two dimensions and fully realised HD (subject to specification and QAA review). Join Paul Greaatrix for a tour of the weird, the wonderful, and the wacky in higher education, from regulation to rankings and everything in between.</p> <p>Paul Greaatrix, Registrar, University of Nottingham</p>  |   | <p><b>Wonk Corner: Reconnecting with our professional communities</b></p> <p>At times of crisis, keeping our professional connections alive can take a back seat, and online interaction kills off the office chatter, the networking event, and the chance meeting. That's a problem - for our professional development, our enjoyment of work, and for our creativity. In this session Debbie McVitty asks, how can HE professionals make reconnecting with our communities a priority post-pandemic?</p> <p>Madiha Sajid, equality and diversity practitioner, Imperial College London and Women in Higher Education Network (WHEN)<br/>Jen Summerton, Executive Director, HESPA<br/>Debbie McVitty, Editor, Wonkhe</p>   |  |
| 14.00-15.00      | <p><b>Data as dialogue - building a more responsive and personalised student experience data ecosystem</b></p> <p>During the Covid pandemic, if universities had waited for their NSS results to find out how students were feeling, a lot more students would have left their courses. Learning analytics, pulse surveys and student voice systems came into their own as universities sound to understand their students' experiences and rapidly respond to issues. Now, with the NSS under review, what is the value and purpose of different kinds of information about students' experiences and opinions? How can live data be harnessed by university leaders, academics, students and students' unions to enhance student experience in real time?<br/><i>Sponsored by Solutionpath</i></p> <p>Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education, University of Aberdeen<br/>Abigail Moriarty, pro vice chancellor for learning and teaching, University of Sunderland.<br/>Richard Gascoigne, chief executive, Solutionpath<br/>Hattie Tollerson, President, London South Bank SU<br/>Jim Dickinson, Associate Editor, Wonkhe</p> | <p><b>Creators, not consumers - preparing students for a complex world</b></p> <p>Higher education students are more diverse than they have ever been. And they are graduating into a world that is rapidly changing, in which smart technologies are redefining society and the way we work. In order to respond universities need to develop curricula that balance academic knowledge, applied skills and mindsets that will enable graduates to thrive and prepare them to solve the challenges of the future. How is that curriculum being brought to life?<br/><i>Sponsored by Adbbe</i></p> <p>Karen Heard-Laureote, Professor and Head of Learning and Teaching, Solent University<br/>Neil Mackenzie, Associate Director - Membership, Sheffield Students' Union<br/>Andrew Turner, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), Coventry University<br/>Sam Elkington, Principal Lecturer, Learning and Teaching Enhancement, Teesside University.<br/>Debbie McVitty, Editor, Wonkhe</p> | <p><b>Leading out of crisis - revert, renovate, or revolutionise?</b></p> <p>Over the past year universities have been thrust into crisis mode, coping with shifting demands and constant changes to conditions in sustaining learning, teaching and research. Strategies have accelerated, and priorities have shifted. As the sector emerges, and begins to map out the "next normal", leaders face choices about what strategies to adopt and how to implement them: revert to usual practice, renovate existing systems, or pursue revolutionary change. We'll explore the options on the table, and the implications of each for universities' future success in the post-Covid landscape over the coming decade.<br/><i>Sponsored by KPMG</i></p> <p>David Bell, Vice-Chancellor, University of Sunderland<br/>Sam Sanders, Director for Higher Education, KPMG<br/>Debbie McVitty, Editor at Wonkhe</p> | <p><b>Identity crisis - comms in the age of the culture wars</b></p> <p>Universities are in the eye of the culture wars storm, whether the story of the day is about woke students, broke students, decolonisation, or grade inflation. Playing defence doesn't work. Changing the conversation doesn't work. The stories just keep coming. It's often said that university leaders should be bolder in speaking up on issues, but the personal risks are great and the reputational payoff uncertain. How should universities develop communication strategies for a politically divided world?</p> <p>Rosemary Bennett, former Education Editor, The Times<br/>Ben Verinder, Managing Director, Chalkstream<br/>Alicia O'Grady, Executive Director of External Relations, University of Bristol<br/>Mark Leach, Editor in Chief, Wonkhe</p>  |

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| 15.00-15.30      | <b>Wonk Corner: Prediction is futile, forecasting is fun, and responding quickly matters</b>   |   | <b>Wonk Corner: Data for leadership</b>   |
|                  | <p>For anyone involved in the influencing, interpreting or delivery of higher education policy, knowing what's around the corner so it might be resisted, championed, finessed or fundamentally changed is crucial. In this session Wonkhe's Jim Dickinson will dust off his crystal ball, dig out his fortune teller fish and try to guess what we might all be facing in higher education policy and politics in the year ahead - because forewarned is forearmed and all that. He'll also share thoughts on the ways in which rapid reaction to an environment that's changing faster than ever can become more effective and less "giant bunny in headlights."</p> <p>Jim Dickinson, Associate Editor, Wonkhe</p>  |   | <p>dataHE's Andrew Hargreaves breaks down the essential data points for every higher education leader to make the best decisions possible in uncertain times.</p> <p>Andrew Hargreaves, Founder, dataHE</p>   |
| 15.30-16.30      | <b>Creating a sense of belonging - transforming teaching and learning inclusion</b>  | <b>Post-compulsory blues - widening opportunity and supporting student choice</b>   | <b>Data and its discontents</b>   |
|                  | <p>Covid-19 has shifted the kaleidoscope in patterns of inclusion and exclusion, with implications for how universities design learning and teaching environments. Examples of good practice abound for known issues such as awarding gaps, digital accessibility, and gendered patterns of participation - but how can initiatives link together to build a truly diverse and inclusive learning environment?</p> <p><i>Sponsored by Pearson</i></p> <p>Dr Flo Starks, Chief Diversity Officer, Pearson<br/>Sunday Blake, President, University of Exeter Students' Guild<br/>Jess Moody, Senior Adviser, Advance HE<br/>More TBC</p>   | <p>Diversity of choice sounds like a luxury, but it's possible to have too much of a good thing. Public data on universities competes with marketing literature, social media influencers, league tables, and rating sites - and alternatives to traditional university routes are notoriously poorly understood. As governments seek to expand the range of information, pathways, and options available - while potentially reforming admissions to reduce the available time for decision-making - we're asking what diverse prospective students need to be able to answer the question "which option is right for me?"</p> <p><i>Sponsored by UCAS</i></p> <p>Johnny Rich, CEO, Push   CEO, EPC   HE consultant<br/>Joel Roach, Business Management Apprentice, Microsoft<br/>Shoonagh Hubble, Head of Careers and Higher Education, Barton Peveril Sixth Form College<br/>Clare Marchant, Chief Executive, UCAS</p> | <p>All policy is data - but what happens when the time series and expectations that data brings are disrupted? Are figures from the three academic years affected by the pandemic meaningful in the context of longer trends? There are huge implications for all of our favourite regulatory measurements, and also TEF. Wonkhe's associate editor is here to take everyone - from the mildly interested to the "data person" - through what all this might mean.</p> <p>Rachel Hewitt, Director of Policy and Advocacy, HEPI<br/>Andy Youell, writer, speaker and strategic data advisor<br/>Jackie Njoroge, Director of Strategy, University of Salford<br/>David Kernohan, Associate Editor, Wonkhe</p>   |
|                  |  |   | <b>The crowdsourced university - a choose your own adventure experience</b>   |
|                  |  |   | <p>We're all well-versed in predictions for disruption and change to the traditional university model coming out of the pandemic—we're just hoping someone else goes first. EAB's Gary Quadagnolo invites you to imagine taking that bold first step in this choose-your-own adventure session. We'll be building a university from scratch, crowdsourcing decisions about the programme portfolio, student experience, physical campus, and more from attendees. We'll ask a panel of distinguished higher education practitioners and experts to mull over the implications of those decisions in designing this post-pandemic university. And we'll consider whether this Crowdsourced U. represents a model that our own institutions could—or should—emulate.</p> <p><i>Sponsored by EAB</i></p> <p>Helen Watson, Chief Operating Officer, Goldsmiths University of London<br/>Mark Ferrar, CIO, Newcastle University<br/>Aashish Khadia, Director of Planning, University of Leicester<br/>Gary Quadagnolo, Director of Research, EAB</p> |
| 16.30-17.00      | <b>Wonk Corner: Sensemaking review</b>   |   | <b>Wonk Corner: Sensemaking review</b>  |
|                  | <p>Your chance to pause for breath and review the best of what you've heard over the course of the day, and what it means for your role, and your organisation.</p> <p>Mark Leach, Editor in Chief, Wonkhe<br/>Jim Dickinson, Associate Editor, Wonkhe<br/>Smita Jamdar, Partner and Head of Education, Shakespeare Martineau</p>  |   | <p>Your chance to pause for breath and review the best of what you've heard over the course of the day, and what it means for your role, and your organisation.</p> <p>Debbie McVitty, Editor, Wonkhe<br/>David Kernohan, Associate Editor, Wonkhe<br/>Johnny Rich, CEO, Push   CEO, EPC   HE consultant<br/>Anne-Marie Canning, Chief Executive, The Brilliant Club</p>  |
| 17.00-18.00      | <b>The UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission</b>   |   | <b>In conversation with Ian Diamond</b>   |
|                  | <p>The UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission is founded on one deceptively simple question: what do students need from their universities to be successful post-Covid? Rebuilding student community, preparing to enter the graduate workforce, adapting to a changed learning environment - getting these right could make a real difference not only to this generation of students, but to future cohorts as well. There's loads of great thinking going on, so join in and share your thoughts.</p> <p>Meg Price, President of Worcester Students' Union<br/>Nikita Khandwala, Strategy at LinkedIn and Co-Founder of Unbox<br/>Colin Bailey, President and Principal of Queen Mary University of London<br/>Mary Curnock Cook, Chair, UPPF Student Futures Commission</p> |   | <p>Ian Diamond, National Statistician, key member of the government's scientific advisory committee SAGE and former vice chancellor, has had a year like no other. In conversation with Wonkhe's editor in chief Mark Leach, he'll discuss the use of data in decision-making at the highest levels of government, public confidence in science following the pandemic, and the role of national data in reflecting and shaping public opinion.</p> <p>Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician<br/>Mark Leach, Editor in Chief, Wonkhe</p>   |